

# GET READY! SANTA BARBARA

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

## Santa Barbara City Fire Department – Prevention Division

Been to a theater and looked for that familiar lighted Exit sign or been to a meeting hall or restaurant that has an occupancy load limit? Ever wonder who decides where those are placed or how many people can fit in a building or room?

The City's Fire Department has a Division called Prevention? What is Prevention? Who staffs it and why do they exist? We will find that out in this issue of our Newsletter.

The Fire Department's Prevention Division is made up of a Fire Marshal, five Fire Inspectors, Fire Services Specialist and an Administrative Specialist. So what is fire prevention and what do fire inspectors do? In order to understand Prevention we will need to take a look at some fire history.

**History:** Since the [Great Fire of Rome](#) (64 AD) there have been many changes in fire prevention. The first [American Fire Ordinance was in 1631](#), was in Boston, Massachusetts. John Winthrop, Governor of Boston, outlawed the building of wooden chimneys and thatched roofs of homes as each of these were found to cause more and dangerous fires throughout the community. This became the first Building Code.

In 1903, the [Iroquois Theater Fire](#), was known as the deadliest theater and single building fire in the history of the United States. This fire created federal and state standards for exiting pathways, exit doors, exit signs and markings, maximum seating and the use of panic bars.

In the history of the United States many fires caused changes to the fire code, such as the [Triangle Waistcoat Factory](#). On March 25, 1911 New York experienced its worst fire with 146 dead due to substandard working conditions. Due to that fire, the National Fire Protection Agency issued the first National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) code; 101 Life Safety Code, so this type of tragedy would not happen again.

Many codes and standards were developed due to large fires in theaters, factories, hotels, and other places of business. As a note, even penitentiaries were not exempt to code changes due to fires. Case in point, the [Ohio Penitentiary Fire](#) of 1930, which at the time was considered a "Fire Proof" prison that housed 1500 inmates. There were 320 prisoners that died and 130 that were seriously injured. This brought about changes requiring new and existing correctional facilities be constructed of limited- or non-combustible materials and to be provided with automatic sprinkler and/or fire alarm systems.

For more information on the history of NFPA Codes and Standards, [click here](#). (continued on pg. 2)



### Inside this issue:

Fire Prevention (cont)	2
Fire Prevention (cont)	3
Did You Know?	4
Stella's Corner	5
Significant Dates	6
Hazard Mitigation Plan	7



## Fire Prevention (cont)

The City of Santa Barbara has had its share of fires; such as the fires on Stearns Wharf in 1973 and 1998. There was also the Potters Hotel Fire in 1903 and many other current business and home fires that could have been prevented with something as small as a smoke detector or alarm system.

Some duties of the Fire Inspector include the following:

**Plan Review.** Fire Inspectors spend time in the Community Development building every business day between 1 pm and 2 pm to answer over the counter questions and perform plan checks on commercial and residential development within the City.

These plan checks may include reviewing fire sprinkler and/or fire alarm systems, commercial kitchen fire suppression systems, and special fire suppression systems such as foam and clean agents. Plan checks are conducted using the current California Fire Code, Municipal Code, and nationally recognized standards such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). These plan checks are then followed up by field inspections to ensure compliance before being signed off and put into service.

**Pre-Development Review.** Prior to formally submitting plans for approval, Fire Inspectors are involved in the pre-development process offered by the City. This can save both time and money for developers with conceptual ideas of new or proposed changes to existing buildings while ensuring Fire Department standards.

**Code Enforcement.** Working as code enforcement agents, Fire Inspectors ensure fire and life safety in existing buildings. Inspectors work hand in hand with Engine Company personnel during routine fire inspections, which occur every two years for all business within the City. These enforcement cases may lead to legal action with Fire Inspectors working with the City Attorneys office to ensure compliance. Enforcement cases can be long and complex especially with some of the unique qualities of the City and its buildings.

**Fire Investigations.** Fire Inspectors are also Fire Investigators. They are responsible for determining the origin and cause of all fires that occur within the corporate city limits. Prevention is currently staffed by five certified fire investigators. There is an investigator on duty 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. Each investigator is typically on-call and available to respond to fires a week at a time, usually Monday through Monday. When a fire occurs whether accidental, criminal or suspicious in nature they pursue the investigation to its conclusion.

Fire Investigators often assist neighboring fire departments with fire investigations when requested and are participating members of the District Attorney's Arson Task Force. When an investigation is determined to be criminal in nature fire investigators work side by side with officers from the Santa Barbara Police Department. Investigators conduct approximately 60 to 70 fire investigations a year.

But this is not all that City Fire Inspectors do for our community.



“Tragedies can be avoided when property owners and code enforcement officers work together.”

Unknown



## Fire Prevention (cont)



*Extreme hoarding of ordinary combustible materials such as paper, cardboard, clothing, furniture, etc. is not only hazardous for the occupant of the property but also for fire fighters who may have to enter the structure during an emergency.*

**Hoarding.** The Prevention Division receives numerous reports of hazardous hoarding conditions in homes and/or apartments, each year. A Fire Inspector responds to the report by contacting the occupant/owner of the property conducting inspections to determine if the condition of the property is hazardous or not.

Extreme hoarding of ordinary combustible materials such as paper, cardboard, clothing, furniture, etc. is not only hazardous for the occupant of the property but also for fire fighters who may have to enter the structure during an emergency. Hoarding conditions restrict mobility inside the structure and can hinder the occupant's ability to exit the structure, in a timely manner, in the case of a fire. It can also hinder the fire fighter's ability to get into the structure to save the occupant. Additionally, the extremer fire load of combustible materials contributes to the spread of fire.

Hoarding is an extremely distressing and complex mental disorder that is often accompanied by other psychological disorders such as depression and social phobias. People with a hoarding disorder are very difficult to work with. In extreme cases, it can take up to a year, or more, to get a hazardous property safe. The recidivism rate of hoarding is very high.

**Fireworks.** Public displays of aerial fireworks in the City occur on the 4th of July for Independence Day and for the Holiday Parade of Lights in the Harbor. The Fire Prevention Bureau issues a permit to the fireworks company conducting the show. A Fire Inspector monitors all aspect of the show ensuring that the shooter is a California licensed Public Display Pyro Technician, that the "guns"/mortars and firework shells are properly set-up, and that an adequate safety zone is maintained around the firing site.

**High Fire Area Mapping.** There are many areas within the City vulnerable to loss from wildland fire. They are identified as the City high fire hazard areas. California requires these areas to be identified and to adopt and implement codes designed to protect the community and structures (such as defensible space and building construction requirements). The Wildland Fire Specialist as part of the Prevention Bureau identifies these areas.

These areas were identified using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to complete a hazard and risk assessment. GIS is a powerful digital processing and mapping software that allows you to analyze multiple layers of data. To determine the wildfire hazard GIS data (such as percent slope, aspect and vegetation) were over laid, analyzed and processed to determine the high fire hazard area. The hazard results were then overlaid with unique City features (such as closeness of structures, fire history, response times, roof types and road systems) to determine the risks present if a wildfire burned in these areas. Both hazard and risk were then combined to develop and implement prevention programs, mitigation measures, and fire codes that result in reducing the impact when a wildfire burns in our community.

**Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District.** Establish in 2006 as the result of a ballot measure, passed by the residents within the Foothill and extreme Foothill High Fire Hazard Areas within the City. Within the (continued on Pg. 7)



## Did You Know?

We had a huge baseball field called Laguna Park? In 1933 the Laguna Park story began as America's Great Depression deepened. For some background, by the 1900s, the area between Olive, Ortega, Garden and Cota Streets had become a dumping ground and muddy marsh, rimmed by tules that burned off occasionally. In 1928, the dump caught fire and burned for two weeks, sending armies of giant rats scampering. And by the 1930s, it was a stinking mess.

At that time, the Junior Chamber of Commerce figured that a major-league farm team or spring-training site would put dollars into Santa Barbara's drooping economy. So, the city decided to build the field in the open space between Olive, Ortega, Garden, and Cota streets, and to close off Laguna Street.

The park only seated 2,083, but it was no tank-town bandbox. With a center-field fence a long 440 feet from the plate, Laguna Park was larger than Wrigley Field in Chicago or the Dodgers' Ebbets Field in Brooklyn. "We had a full-sized major-league park," long-time groundskeeper Tim Badillo told the late S.B. historian Walker Tompkins.

The good times did not last, however. Fog could be a problem, and when visibility was reduced to 10 feet, games had to be canceled. The low-lying field had a propensity to flood (the ballpark, unfortunately, seemed to be well-named). Then the advent of television devastated minor leagues across the nation. Who would want to pay to see minor leaguers when one could watch the majors in the comfort of their own home for free?

Despite all kinds of promotions and the chance to see Dodger stars of tomorrow, attendance averaged only 225. The Dodgers left for good in 1967 after losing a reported \$100,000. City Hall began clamoring to raze the unused acreage. The Park Commission urged that the green space be kept for Eastside recreation, but the wrecking ball was called in to pitch.

Today, the park, covering two square blocks, is home to the Parks & Recreation Department and equipment yard and the Public Works and Community Development building, which includes Motor Pool and Purchasing.

Sources:

[Daily Sound 8/28/2008](#)

[Independent—Barney Brantingham 05/05/2011](#)





## Stella's Page—What's in Your Car?

With my visitor's pass in hand, I checked in at reception at a lovely gym in Bend, Oregon. My routine is simple, a twenty minute warm up on the recumbent bike, then ten minutes on the elliptical followed by the balance of the hour on the treadmill. With that hour done, I follow with a session on the machines or weights, and leave the gym feeling righteous for the day.

This particular gym is like many others with rows of cardiac equipment facing high wall mounted televisions. My bike was in the row behind the treadmills. The treadmills were full of walkers and runners, all working at varying paces. I was reading a good book with one eye on the treadmill row hoping to catch a vacancy.



When the incident happened, it was so quick and so subtle, others seemed to not notice. An older man on the treadmill ahead of me on the right just let go. He did not fall, he simply unwound and softly rolled off the treadmill face down. There was no crumpling or cry for help. He was splayed flat on his front, arms at his sides, legs straight. His face, which was turned to one side was very pale. His shoulders, upper chest and head were still on the moving treadmill. He was motionless.

I jumped from my bike, and in two steps was able to reach the treadmill and push the red OFF button. The treadmill stopped. I assessed the situation quickly by asking if I could please check his pulse. He made no response, and no pulse was present. I looked at the people around me and asked for someone to get help, call 911.

As I prepared to take the next step, he suddenly began to move very slowly. I again asked his name, and he responded. I asked again to check his pulse and he turned up his hand. Putting my fingers on his wrist, I felt a strong regular pulse. He asked for help standing, which I was able to do with the help of another person. I asked for a chair, and one was immediately brought. A trainer was on the scene, so I stepped away.

Later, on my way to the exit, I saw him on the stretch mat with his leg extended. I asked how he was feeling, and he said, "All right." Then he got up and told me he was fine, and that I couldn't know how he was. He did not recall falling. I suggested he see his doctor.

Not everything we do is appreciated or acknowledged, but knowing what to do and when to do it saves lives. Even though there was no CPR initiated, just the simple act of moving quickly in sequenced steps makes a big difference. He may not remember, but I'll never forget.

CERT instruction includes some classroom presentations, some demonstrations which always includes the CERT students, plus a drill at the end of the training. The drill may not be perfect, but that's where we learn the lesson. Knowing what to do and when, and knowing how to pass control of the situation to others in authority is part of CERT training. Knowing that not all help is acknowledged or appreciated is just part of the job.



Stella Larson,  
Mesa Resident

## Significant Dates



This section will cover significant dates to remember and some that may have been forgotten.

### May

- 1—May Day
- 2—Baby Day
- 3—Lumpy Rug Day
- 4—Star Wars Day
- 5—Cinco de Mayo/  
Jesusita Fire 2009
- 6—Space Day
- 7—National Tourism Day
- 8—Mother's Day
- 9—Lost Sock Memorial Day
- 10—Clean up Your Room Day
- 11—Twilight Zone Day
- 12—Limerick Day
- 13—Friday the 13th (only one in 2016)
- 14—National Train Day
- 15—Police Officers Memorial Day
- 16—Love a Tree Day
- 17—Pack Rat Day
- 18—International Museum Day
- 19—Boy's Club Day
- 20—Be a Millionaire Day
- 21—National Memo Day
- 22—World Goth Day
- 23—Lucky Penny Day
- 24—National Escargot Day
- 25—National Wine Day
- 26—Sally Ride Day
- 27—Sun Screen Day
- 28—International Jazz Day
- 29—Learn about Composting Day
- 30—Memorial Day
- 31—World No Tobacco Day

### June

- 1—Dare Day
- 2—National Rocky Road Day
- 3—Repeat Day
- 4—Hug Your Cat Day
- 5—World Environment Day
- 6—National Yo-Yo Day
- 7—National Chocolate Ice Cream Day
- 8—Name Your Poison Day
- 9—Donald Duck Day
- 10—Iced Tea Day
- 11—National Corn on the Cob Day
- 12—Red Rose Day
- 13—Sewing Machine Day
- 14—Flag Day
- 15—Smile Power Day
- 16—Fresh Veggies Day
- 17—Eat Your Vegetables Day
- 18—International Sushi Day
- 19—Father's Day
- 20—Ice Cream Soda Day
- 21—Go Skate Day
- 22—National Chocolate Éclair Day
- 23—National Pink Day
- 24—Take Your Dog To Work Day
- 25—Log Cabin Day
- 26—Forgiveness Day
- 27—Sun Glasses Day
- 28—Paul Bunyan Day
- 29—1925 Santa Barbara Earthquake
- 30—Meteor Day

### July

- 1—International Joke Day
- 2—World UFO Day
- 3—Stay Out of the Sun Day
- 4—Independence Day
- 5—Work-a-holics Day
- 6—International Kissing Day
- 7—Chocolate Day
- 8—Video Games Day
- 9—National Sugar Cookie Day
- 10—Teddy Bear Picnic Day
- 11—World Population Day
- 12—Pecan Pie Day
- 13—Embrace Your Geekness Day
- 14—Bastille Day
- 15—Cow Appreciation Day
- 16—Fresh Spinach Day
- 17—Yellow Pig Day
- 18—National Caviar Day
- 19—National Raspberry Cake Day
- 20—Moon Day
- 21—National Junk Food Day
- 22—Hammock Day
- 23—National Hot Dog Day
- 24—Parent's Day
- 25—Culinarians Day
- 26—All or Nothing Day
- 27—Take Your Pants for a Walk Day
- 28—National Milk Chocolate Day
- 29—National Lasagna Day
- 30—Father-in-Law Day
- 31—System Administrator Appreciation Day

## Are You Ready for 2016

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
[CITY OES FACEBOOK](#)

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### Hazard Mitigation Plan

DMA2K is another name for the Disaster Mitigation Act, a U.S. federal legislation passed in the year 2000. It amended the provisions of Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by repealing the previous mitigation planning provisions and replacing them with a new set of requirements that emphasize the need for State, local, and Indian Tribal entities to closely coordinate mitigation planning and implementation efforts.

Every five (5) years the City is required to update their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The time is now and we have begun to revise the City's Plan. The plan also includes mitigation projects that are within the City. By having these projects included in the plan we are able to request mitigation grant funding; when available.

According to the law the City works with the County in developing a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In the near future the City's updated plan will be placed on the OES website and Facebook site for comments.

Keep an eye out and be part of the planning process. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call the City Office of Emergency Services at 805-564-5711.

## Fire Prevention (cont from pg. 3)

WFSAD, residents pay a fee each year to receive services provided by the Fire Department in order to reduce the community's wildfire risk. These services include:

**Defensible Space Evaluations** that are provided so that homeowners can work one-on-one with the Fire Department to learn what they can do in and around the home to improve their properties ability to withstand a wildfire. These evaluations are provided at no additional cost and are offered year-round.

**Chipping Services** are provided annually to all residents within the

WFSAD. Each year in the spring homeowners can dispose of cut vegetation by placing it curb-side where all chipping crews will come by and dispose of it. We also recycle 100% of all chipped material as mulch that is distributed to homeowners per request.

Finally, we conduct **Vegetation Management** projects. In these projects the Fire Department works with property owners to reduce flammable or hazardous vegetation within Vegetation Management Units that are described in the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan. To date, with the cooperation

of homeowners in these project areas, we have been able to reduce the amount of flammable vegetation by 1/2—2/3 on more than 130 acres.

Homeowners are also provided a newsletter each year that outlines these services in addition to the starting dates for each chipping area.

In conclusion, the City Fire Department Prevention Bureau works hard every day to prevent and mitigate all types of fire hazards and promote safety.

For more information contact the Prevention Bureau at 805-564-5702